

Station Facts

Established in the mid 1920s, the farm was used as food source and therapeutic training for mentally-handicapped patients residing at the adjoining hospital. Since its transfer from the N.C. Department of Human Resources in 1974 to the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Caswell Research Farm has redirected its focus to agricultural research and is well suited for large plot research.

The station has a total of 1,259 acres, 150 of which are used for field crops and 20 for infrastructure. Woodlands cover 424 acres and the remaining 700 acres are used for rotational purposes.

In 2006 this station merged with Lower Coastal Plain / Cunningham Research Station also located in Kinston. With one management team and more than double the resources at their disposal, the Lower Coastal Plain / Cunningham / Caswell Research Station is poised to lead the agricultural community into the 21st century.

Infrastructure

There are 29 structures located on the station. In 2005, the farm increased grain drying and storage capacity by upgrading the grain dryer and adding two 27,000 bushel grain bins. Last year, the farm installed a linear travel irrigation system to irrigate 45 acres of research land.

Structures include sheds and shelters for equipment storage for both the farm and researchers. The farm utilizes old dairy structures for fertilizer and pesticide storage. A shop is provided by and shared with the Caswell Center. The Caswell Center also provides office facilities for the superintendent, office assistant and farm manager.

Research Programs



Soybeans More than 90 acres - equaling more than 12,000 plots - of intensive soybean research is conducted on the farm annually. Researchers have genetically increased the market value of the crop through the use of traditional breeding techniques. Improvements have been made in the composition of the soybeans and production efficiency of the crop. The station also hosts the Official Variety Trial for soybeans.

Corn Research on the farm includes testing experimental hybrids developed by breeding U.S. corn with tropical corns with the goal of identifying new sources of genes for

stress tolerance and productivity for North Carolina growing conditions.

Wheat The farm supports research of no-till production practices in wheat and evaluation studies of Amino Sugar Soil Nitrogen tests.

Weed trials Caswell Research Farm has become one of two locations at which research is being conducted on population dynamics and management of several troublesome weed species that are rapidly spreading in NC (e.g. apple of Peru) or are becoming more difficult to control (e.g. herbicide-resistant Palmer amaranth). Researchers are also working to quantify crop yield loss from new competitively invasive weed species. The land area is large enough to conduct trials in multiple crops simultaneously and the remoteness of area provides for separation from other agronomic investigations and minimizes risk of spread to other locations.

Organics Recently, Caswell has expanded into organic research. This includes research on organically grown red clover, rape seed, canola, lespedza and soybeans. Soybeans are the primary focus with research being conducted on plant populations, no-till systems and breeding a highly competitive variety. Plans include expanding and developing organic research on the 40 acres of certifiable organic land.

The Caswell Research Farm is rapidly on its way to being the premier location for row crop plant breeding evaluation studies in the state.



Community Partnership

The primary purpose of this research station is to provide resources in the form of land, equipment, personnel, expertise, labor, facilities and irrigation to research scientists conducting field research studies on agricultural crops.

The station currently provides support for scientists conducting research on both conventional and organic production cultural practices. Because of its location in the agricultural community of Eastern North Carolina and its large highly productive fields this research facility is extremely important to Agricultural Research Service scientists and the private farming sector.

Corn and Soybean breeders have benefited greatly from the uniform, high yielding soils. Soybean breeders have made tremendous progress in evaluating breeding lines by being at this location because of the uniformity of highly productive soils.



Research Stations Division

Working together for one cause

Mission

To manage crop and livestock facilities that serve as a platform for agriculture research to make farming more efficient, productive, and profitable, while maintaining a sound environment and providing consumers with safe and affordable products.

Partnership

Agriculture research in North Carolina dates back to 1877, when state legislation established the N.C. Department of Agriculture along with “Experiment Stations” as a division of the department. Since that time, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Research Stations Division, in partnership with N.C. State University, has established 18 statewide locations. Each facility has unique climate and soil conditions, giving researchers a living laboratory in which to investigate a variety of regional crops, forestry concerns, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture. The Division supports these studies by providing land, water, equipment, buildings, and staff who work around the clock to help build a stronger foundation for the future of agriculture.

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RESEARCH STATIONS DIVISION

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